

Final report

Comenius – school cooperations
October 1st 2007 – July 31st 2009

School and Cycling

Cologne – Gardanne – Riga – Rhodes
[www.“school-and-cycling.eu“](http://www.school-and-cycling.eu)

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1. Formal information of the partnership

Athletes are supported in many schools in Europe in a different manner with the goal to combine secondary education and top-level sport.

At the example of the sport cycling (street and track cycling) four educational systems from Germany (North Rhine-Westphalia), Latvia, Greece and France should get examined.

All schools, who are involved in the program build up their own networks, where the partners like cities, sport clubs, confederations and other institutions gave assistance. Different was the approach with the selection of the pupils: one school organised their own intensive talent scouting – others only accepted already professional top-level athletes. One school is a boarding school, two are day boarding schools (the pupils can have lunch at the school, but do not stay overnight).

These aspects make a comparison very interesting. Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the different systems? Are there any historical reasons for the development of the different schools (Western Europe / Eastern Europe)? We want to learn from each other. The two-year, multilateral partnership is for pupils and teachers of the participating schools, in equal measure, very interesting.

2. Objectives and results

Two main objectives of the project work were expressed with the application and were achieved to a 100 %:

2.1 The compilation of a homepage

The website www.school-and-cycling.eu is from now on online on the web – but till July 2009 still in a beta version. All four partners present their own school systems on this website. In the respective category there are:

- School and Cycling - homepage
- Project Partners - partner schools, addresses, associate members, coordinators ...
- Educational System - school forms and educational systems of the respective countries
- Our School - the own school profile
- Cycling Support - precise approach of the sport promotion, training schedule, time table examples
- Gallery - photos of the meetings
- Interactive Journal - weblog, forum for communication about written content for pupils + teachers + interested people
- Materials and Results - videos, press, lectures

The compilation of this website has the intent to maintain the intercultural dialogue between the project partners and also to give other European schools, who promote cycling the chance to bring themselves in the topic.

2.2 The organisation of an international cycling training camp for the pupils

From April 1st till April 12th 2009 the first common training camp took place in Aix en Provence with the participation of up to 40 young cyclers of the partners. With all in all nice weather up to 1.000 training kilometers were completed in different classes.

It is planned to organise a common training camp for the young people also during the Easter period in the upcoming years.

The surrounding conditions (accommodation, catering, routes etc.) were perfectly organised from the French partners – the sporting content were elaborated by the German and Latvian coaches.

3. Communication and team work

The whole team work took basically place in English. Main communication channel was the E-Mail correspondence of the participating teachers and pupils and of course project meetings.

During the project time four big meeting took place overall, in each of the participating cities. The Kick-off meeting was in Cologne in January 2008. Besides of numerous speeches about the school system, the sport promotion of the state North Rhine-Westphalia and the sport office of the city of Cologne, there were also visits of the Heinrich-Böll comprehensive school, the German Sport University and of course of the city of Cologne, accompanied by a sport program for the pupils from four European countries. The highlights were drama performances in the school, a visit of the ice hockey club KEC in the Cologne-Arena and the common training at the Cologne velodrome.

The second big project meeting took place in April 2008 in Rhodes. There was also time besides the school program for a lot of culture and history and of course cycling on this wonderful Mediterranean island.

In October 2008 the trip went to Latvia. The city of Murjani is located around 30 kilometers outside of Riga. The sport boarding school, many sport facilities, the sport university and the city of Riga were visited. Here, besides the speeches about the educational system, also the promotion of the intercultural dialogue was in the foreground.

The fourth and final meeting of this series of presenting the own schools and the surroundings was the visit in the city of Gardanne (near Aix en Provence) in May 2009.

Here once again the visitors gained an insight view of the French educational and sport promotion system. But mainly the final meeting was important to evaluate the previous results, as well as the amicable creation of the homepage, which also will be produced as a CD-ROM.

All partners were due to progression of the project meetings in the own country absolutely equally involved and engaged. The cooperation occurred in a friendly environment. Different views were fully discussed.

4. Evaluation and check-up

Inside of the school in Cologne, there was a total of 11 protocolled evaluation and project meetings during the project time, in which over and over again the status of the respective project phase was analysed. On various occasions there were corrections on the own approach. Through the scientific company by two graduands of the German Sport University

Cologne the procedure of the project management was at all times evaluated and analysed.

The documentation of the intermediate result for teachers and pupils took place in a big showcase in the foyer of the Heinrich-Böll comprehensive school. The contents (short texts, headlines, photos etc.) were updated after every project meeting.

The first two movies were shown at the „Open Day“ about the everyday life at school of the “cycling students” at a stand about the current cycling project (Dec. 2008).

The check-up of the project phase was possible on a multilateral base during the approx. all four month occurring project meetings. Also there were especially during the meeting in Riga (Oct. 2008) corrections made with the development of the homepage, as well as the formulation of the goals: the common pupils training camp was here from all parties affirmed as important and second project aim and in the following also appropriately organised.

Furthermore in Nov. 2008 the first draft of the website went online, accessible for all the partners at all times. A check-up or evaluation of the present results, here the online placed texts, photos and charts, was also possible to happen on bilateral ways.

5. Summary of the results

The direct effects of the partnership for the pupils and teachers shall be named here at first, as results:

- Improvement of the foreign language skills
- Improvement of the computer skills
- Improvement of the soft skills
- Motivation increase
- Improvement of the knowledge of the school and sport structure of the partner countries
- Improvement of the knowledge of the partner countries and their culture
- Improved self-confidence

Teachers only:

- Improvement of skills in the area of project management
- Improvement of skills in the area of academic and municipal networking (nationwide + internationally)
- Knowledge acquisition in the area PPP (Public-Private-Partnership)
- International contacts
- Improvement of the knowledge of European programs

Project analysis:

At this here present school comparison it stands out, that the school in Murjani (Latvia) differs clearly from the other three partners in terms of organisation and the educational system. At the one hand a sport boarding school on the old East-European model – and on the other hand three secondary schools in Western countries of EU, which just picked up the

sport promotion alongside the school education just a few years ago. Murjani is a very small boarding school with only approx. 160 pupils and 43 teachers. Only members of the national teams attend the school. They assemble themselves out of athletes from cycling, athletics, handball, rowing and volleyball. Everything is tuned for the perfect sporting education (training in the morning, very short holidays, medical care, small classes etc.). But Murjani is directly responsible to the Latvian ministry of education and science, unlike to all the other schools in Latvia. Normally in Latvia the cities or municipalities are the education authority like in Western Europe. Just now this prerequisite is causing to be a problem for Murjani: Through the economic crisis the Latvian state finances have reached a heavy precarious, so that they think about closing a school like Murjani. The money for the municipalities and so for the normal, state schools keeps running.

The Venetoklion grammar school in Rhodes is a school with approx. 400 pupils. A special set up sport promotion program of the region of the Eastern Aegean islands in Greece even allows the school to install sport classes. The promotion of the athletes is similar like in Cologne (North Rhine-Westphalia), that is to say there is the possibility to adjust the training times to the school timetable and the local sport clubs bring in their sporting competence in the extracurricular activities. Besides cycling there is mainly basketball promoted in Rhodes. Unfortunately cycling has only little development potentialities, as the training conditions are good, but the distance to competitions is long and expensive. Mentionable is the opportunity to train on a velodrome in the city of Rhodes.

The French in fact have no time in their school system during the time table for sport promotion. You can say, there is school from 8.00 am till 6.00 pm;

afterwards sport takes place in the clubs. The partner club of Lycée Four-Cade in cycling is „Velo Club La Pomme Marseille“, one of the biggest cycling clubs in France. The cooperation with this club is of great use for the school, as the whole spectrum of the education from a cycling pupil to a cycling professional is supported by professional coaches and a capable managing committee.

As an intermediate result of the project, the headmaster of the French school, Mr. Denis Barroero, has now installed extra tuition on the model of the Cologne school for competitive athletes, that is to say single teachers give, if necessary, private lessons to the good athletes of the school (1.400 pupils).

The French headmaster also offered a Latvian school graduant, Gatis Smukulis, entry in the professional team of La Pomme Marseille. Gatis is junior professional in this year at AG 2 R, a professional team of the South of France and has already completed „Paris – Roubaix“. Gatis has a big career as a cycling professional ahead of him, thanks to the EU project „School & Cycling“.

As an additional coproduct a student exchange of the Heinrich-Böll-comprehensive school Cologne and the school from Gardanne could be established. The German class from Provence visited Cologne in May and the French class of the 11th grade of the comprehensive school did a return visit to Gardanne/Aix/Marseille.

Apart from Latvia all school authorities of the partner were the respective cities. There were state schools for sporting excellence in all countries, but they were not compared.

There are overall 12 schools for sporting excellence in Germany, which

also promote cycling, nine of them are located in the region of the former GDR, three of them in the Western part of Germany (Kaiserslautern, Stuttgart, Freiburg).

The sport promotion system of North Rhine-Westphalia showed to be very reasonable and comprehensive, fitting for a Western European school system (lunch at school, extra tuition for competitive athletes, cooperation with the clubs, adjusted training times to the timetable). Combined with the cycling promotion of the city of Cologne (sport office) the promotion model is set-up very sensible.

The outstanding sport facilities really stood out in Cologne (school: two triple gyms, playing fields, green area, velodrome Cologne – race track).

The German Sport University Cologne contributed with two diploma thesis to the project: „Sport promotion schools in Germany“ from Fabian Dechert (2008) and „Empirical study of the performance motivation on the basis of young participants of the EU project : School & Cycling“ from Kathrin Mannweiler (2009).

The cycling federation of North Rhine-Westphalia as an associated partner could clearly develop its knowledge of the basic conditions of the performance sport promotion, especially in Latvia. The school administration department and the sport office of the city of Cologne benefited of the gained experiences, especially with regard to the assessment of the own sport promotion programs at other schools in Cologne in comparison with the visited European possibilities of comparison.

The working atmosphere during the project work became always more

heartily. The loose and equally hospitable atmosphere at all project meetings reminded at the end of a visit with old friends.

As regards content it was seriously reflected upon the own work and the work approach and it was presented to the partners.

In the four schools, whole classes were actively involved in the project work. Above all, works of art in Rhodes and Cologne, Riga and Gardanne are preserved as witnesses of the project history in the schools.

In all four cities the project work to „School and Cycling “ also found huge resonance in the local policy. In Cologne there was an official greeting by the sports head of department of the city of Cologne, in Rhodes there was a receipt with the mayor of Rhodes in the council hall, in Riga there was a receipt in the school ministry and in Gardanne a receipt in the city hall. The local press was present and reported about the EU project work at all the appointments.

Of course the international meeting also stood always on the central point of the meetings. Friendships were made (between the teachers and between the pupils) in unforgettable evenings in Cologne, Rhodes, Riga and Marseille and at the end even some shed tears.

As a ray of hope a private revival meeting of all partners was agreed for September 2010 in Prague. Prague, because it lies right in the middle of our four partner cities.

New projects are planned for the future. Specially the french and the german school are optimistic to realize a new EU – Comenius Project in 2010 or 2011.

6. Basic statistics

- All in all the project was promoted with 60.000,-- €, which were divided by a country code.
- The school in Cologne undertook overall 29 mobilities (12 compulsory mobilities). More than 20 teachers were directly involved in the project and also 20 pupils.
- Altogether 9 press articles were published (5 x Cologne, 2 x Rhodes, 1 x Riga, 1 x Gardanne)

My special thanks go to the headmistress Mrs. Maria Papadaki and Mrs. Meni Katsara, Rhodes; to the headmaster Ivars Sprancis and the coordinator and English teacher Mrs. Gita Satovska, Riga; to the headmaster Mr. Denis Barroero, Gardanne and his team as well as the Cologne team of the Heinrich-Böll comprehensive school Cologne.

Cologne, June 15th 2009

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7. School addresses of the partners:

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Latvia